

# On the History of the English Progressive Construction *Jane came whistling down the street*

Journal of English Linguistics

1–36

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DOI: 10.1177/0075424220945008

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## Abstract

This article examines the historical development of the VVingOBL construction, as exemplified by “*Jane came whistling down the street*” or “*She went walking up the field path*,” where an intransitive motion verb is followed by a present participle and an oblique complement. The analysis looks at the precursors of the construction since Old English and argues that the sharp rise in productivity of the VVingOBL construction, especially from the second half of the nineteenth century, is interrelated with changes affecting English motion vocabulary in Early and Late Modern English and also the increase in frequency of the BE progressive over the same period. By the twentieth century, the VVingOBL construction had settled into its modern form, namely a deictic-directional construction with either COME or GO in the V slot. The article also considers indices of the advancing grammaticalization of the construction. It concludes by discussing whether its morphosyntactic and semantic properties support considering it as a serial verb construction, a hypothesis briefly raised in work by Goldberg (2006:52).

## Keywords

deixis, event integration, motion construction, progressive, serialization, verb descriptivity

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to examine the origins and historical development of the construction exemplified in (1) and (2) (henceforth, the VVingOBL construction).

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- (1) [. . .] the merry little group *went laughing* up the stairs. (BNC, 1991, Sunley, *Fields in the sun*)
- (2) he [. . .] *came running* forward. (CLMET3.01, 1726, Chetwood, *The voyages [. . .] of Captain Robert Boyle*)

In terms of form, these structures involve an intransitive motion verb (V), such as COME or GO, followed by a verb in the *-ing* form (*Ving*) and a complement specifying a dynamic path (OBL). Semantically, the verb in the *-ing* form expresses an action taking place simultaneously with that of V. The construction has an alternative, seen in (3) and (4), consisting of a motion clause and an adverbial subordinate clause as a separate constituent.

- (3) Troops of bright-eyed girls [. . .] *went, tripping beneath the trees*, towards the cottage of Widow Gostillon. (CLMET3.03, 1852, *Chamber's Edinburgh journal*)
- (4) Cecil Graham *comes* towards him *laughing*. (CLMET3.03, 1892, Wilde, *Lady Windermere's fan*)

The past thirty years have seen extensive research on the development of various kinds of sequences involving *-ing* forms. Most notably, attention has been paid to those constructions where the *-ing* form is gerundial in origin, that is, it goes back to an abstract action noun in *-ing* (as in 5).

- (5) Forbeare the *eting* of Swynis flesche. (1552 J. Hamilton, *Catech.* I.i.f.6; *OED*, s.v. *forbear* v. 5)

From Late Middle English (LME) onwards, this noun developed verbal properties and became formally indistinguishable from the present participle. This development led to the emergence of the *-ing* clausal patterns that now complement verbs like BEGIN, CEASE, FORBEAR, HATE, INTEND, LIKE, LOVE, REMEMBER, STOP, and SUGGEST (for further discussion, see Fanego 1996, 2004; Mair 2002; De Smet 2013:131-251). By comparison, the structures in (1) and (2) have received little attention to date, synchronically or diachronically. The current paper seeks to fill this gap, using corpus data from both historical and contemporary English. More specifically, the analysis aims to assess the interrelation between the development and consolidation of the *VVingOBL* construction over the Early and Late Modern English (EModE and LModE) periods and other developments that took place in English at about the same time, most notably the grammaticalization of a progressive periphrasis with BE (Kranich 2010) and changes in the expression of motion events, as discussed in Fanego (2012, 2017, 2019) and Perek (2018).

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the existing literature on the *VVingOBL* construction and offers a brief preliminary characterization. Section 3 summarizes the theoretical model—Talmy's typology of complex event integration (1972, 2000:II, 21-288)—which will be employed in order to organize and interpret the results from the corpus data. Section 4 is concerned with the two grammatical

developments noted above, that is, the obligatorification and extended range of uses of the progressive over the Modern period, plus changes in the English motion vocabulary. Section 5 describes the data sources and the procedure for data collection of the VVingOBL construction from LME to the present day. Sections 6 and 7 provide, respectively, an overview of the construction’s precursors in Old and Middle English and the results of the detailed quantitative analysis of the corpus materials. Section 8 discusses the VVingOBL construction in relation to grammaticalization and serialization, and in particular the extent to which the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the construction support analyzing it as a serial verb construction (Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006; Haspelmath 2016). This hypothesis has been raised in work by Goldberg (2006:52), “despite the fact that English does not allow serial verbs in general.” Finally, section 9 offers some concluding remarks.

2. Research on the VVingOBL Construction

Brief references to the use of the VVingOBL construction in Present-Day English (PDE) can be found in Spears (1982:852-853), Bolinger (1983:158), and Salkie (2010:177-179), all of whom essentially agree that both verbs name simultaneous or overlapping actions. In a more comprehensive treatment, Matsumoto (2016) examines a vast collection of English “multi-verb sequences,” namely *-ing* complement clauses in object function (“I don’t *like talking* in public”), aspectuals (“It’s time to *start thinking* about the next year”), so-called expeditionary *go* (“Let’s *go swimming*”; for the label, see Salkie 2010), modality *go* (“Don’t *go behaving* like that to poor Freddy!”; see Bourdin 2003), purpose clauses (“He *went looking* for a gas leak with a lighted match”), and *-ing* clauses following posture verbs (“He *stood brooding* in the corner”). For the specific kind of *-ing* clause which is our concern here, Matsumoto stresses that the actions denoted by the first and second verbs “occur simultaneously” (2016:155), a view basically shared by Broccias and Torre (2018:94) in their recent analysis of the construction.

This view is also found in Goldberg’s (2006) work. It is set within the framework of Construction Grammar (CxG) and its conception of the language system as made up of an inventory of constructions, that is, correspondences of form and meaning that are part of speakers’ linguistic knowledge. Goldberg (2006:50) argues that the VVingOBL construction illustrates “the type of partially idiosyncratic and partially general knowledge that language learners retain.” She adds that the construction bears progressive semantics, “such that the activity described must be construed as obtaining over a period of time or as being iterative” (Goldberg 2006:51). She provides a formal representation of the construction, reproduced here as Figure 1.

Sem:	Move	in a Manner	along a Path
Syn:	V <sub>{GO, COME, RUN, TAKE off}</sub>	Ving	(Oblique)

Figure 1. The VVingOBL Construction (from Goldberg 2006:52)

The representation in Figure 1 employs notation that is characteristic of the CxG model, which pairs a semantic side (“Sem”) with a formal side (“Syn”); the semantic side specifies an overall event meaning (‘move in a [certain] manner along a path’). The formal side specifies a particular configuration of constituents: a V belonging to a very restricted set of possible motion verbs (according to Goldberg, only COME, GO, RUN, and TAKE *off* ‘to go off’ can occur in the V slot), a *Ving* form providing some specification of the kind of motion, and an oblique complement coding a dynamic path. The brackets enclosing the oblique constituent in Figure 1 are presumably intended to imply that the oblique can be latent, rather than expressed overtly, as is indeed the case occasionally both today and in earlier English, shown in (6).

- (6) Sylvie screamed. Screamed and screamed again. An attendant *came running*.  
(BNC, 1992, Appignanesi, *Memory and desire*)

Goldberg’s (2006) representation of the V*Ving*OBL construction can serve as a useful point of departure for the discussion that follows; it will be refined in later sections in light of the evidence retrieved from the various corpora employed in the analysis.

### 3. Talmy’s Typology of Event Integration

The expression of motion events across languages has been a topic of lively debate since the publication, over forty years ago, of Talmy’s influential work (1972, 2000) on the classification of the world’s languages into “satellite-framed” and “verb-framed.” A motion event, according to Talmy (2000:II, 25-26), consists of four components: a) a figure moving with respect to another entity, b) the reference entity, or ground, with respect to which the figure moves, c) the path followed by the figure with respect to the ground, and d) the motion itself. Thus, in (7), *the rock* functions as the figure, *the hill* as the ground, *down* expresses path, and *moved* motion.

- (7) The rock    moved    down    the hill.  
Figure       Motion    Path     Ground

Motion events can differ in terms of their degree of structural complexity: they can be simple, as in (7), which indicates only one dimension of the motion (in this case, information on the path, i.e., *down*), or they can be macro-events (i.e., complex) as in (8)-(10). A macro-event represents as unitary by means of “a single clause” an event that “under a more analytic conceptualization would be understood as complex and represented by a multiclausal syntactic structure” (Talmy 2000:II, 215-216). A consequence of such unitary conceptualization is that macro-events encode or “conflate” (Talmy 1972:257) an additional co-event or support relation of motion. The co-event is very often “manner,” with other possible co-events, according to Talmy’s categorization (2000:II, 28, 42-47, 137, 220-221), being “precursion,” “enablement,” “reverse enablement,” “cause,” “concomitance,” “concurrent result,” and “subsequence.”

- (8) Rudolf opened the door and *walked* in. (CLMET3.03, 1898, Hope, *Rupert of Hentzau*)
- (9) the rain was pattering down, and the people as they *clinked* by in pattens, left long reflections on the shining stone [. . .] (CLMET3.02, 1843, Thackeray, *Vanity fair*)
- (10) The rhinoceros [. . .] still abounds, and I [. . .] once disturbed one feeding, which *went crashing* away through the jungle [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1869, Wallace, *The Malay archipelago*)

Of the various co-events identified by Talmy (2000), three are directly relevant to the present study: manner, concurrent result, and concomitance. A manner, in addition to a motion, is expressed by *walked* in (8). In (9) and (10) the forms *clinked* and *crashing* express a concurrent result: the people make a clinking sound as a result of, and concurrently with, their motion, and the rhinoceros produces a crashing sound while moving through the jungle.

Finally, (11) and (12), quoted from Talmy (2000:II, 46), express concomitance: “an activity that the Figure of the Motion event additionally exhibits [. . .], but does not in itself pertain to the concurrent Motion [. . .] and could just as readily take place by itself.”

- (11) She *wore* a green dress to the party.
- (12) ?I *whistled* past the graveyard [i.e., ‘I went past the graveyard whistling’].

Crucially, as Talmy (2000:II, 46) also notes, the concomitance relation “is not robustly represented in English.” This explains why example (12) is judged unacceptable by most speakers of standard English, as Talmy (2000) acknowledges. In other words, English cannot conflate in an “Intransitive Motion construction” (Goldberg 1995:3) activities such as whistling, laughing (\**She laughed into the room*), singing (\**She sang into the room*), and the like (see also section 4.1).

This formulation of the typology of co-events enabled Talmy (2000:II, 117, 222–223) to establish a fundamental cross-linguistic distinction between satellite-framed and verb-framed languages based on how the various components of a motion event are realized in the surface expression. Very briefly, satellite-framed languages such as English or Russian characteristically encode manner or another co-event in the main verb and path in a satellite; that is, in adverbs such as *by* and *away* in (9) and (10), or in prepositional phrases such as *to the party* and *past the graveyard* in (11) and (12). By contrast, verb-framed languages such as Spanish, French, and Turkish characteristically express path in the verb by means of predicates containing a specification of the direction of motion, such as Spanish *salir* ‘to exit’ in (13). In these languages, the expression of manner or other co-events is thus left to an independent—usually adverbial or participial—constituent.

- (13) La botella      *salió* de la cueva      (*flotando*).  
the bottle      exited from the cave      (floating)  
‘The bottle floated out of the cave.’

Discussing events of motion in verb-framed languages, Talmy (2000:II, 224) makes the interesting observation that a Spanish example such as (13) is really “a complex sentence composed of two clauses and could therefore not represent a macro-event.” He goes on to point out, however, that Spanish also has structures such as in (14), in which the constituent referring to the co-event of manner “is in direct construction with the main verb. With this syntactic pattern, the whole sentence now can be interpreted as a single clause, and hence as representing a macro-event” (Talmy 2000:II, 224).

- (14) La botella      *salió flotando*      de la cueva.  
       the bottle      exited floating      from the cave  
       ‘The bottle floated out of the cave.’

As can be seen, the Spanish clause in (14) is exactly analogous to the VVingOBL pattern. Compare, for example, (14) and “He came running into the room”: in both clauses path is marked in the verbs (*salió* ‘exited’ and *came*) and in the prepositions (*de* ‘from’ and *into*). In addition, both Spanish and English specify the manner of the motion by means of a non-finite verb (*flotando* ‘floating’ and *running*) placed adjacent to the matrix verb. Like the Spanish clause in (14), therefore, the English VVingOBL construction is interpreted here as a macro-event of motion that takes the form of a verb-framed pattern; it is used in English for special discourse purposes, as will be discussed in the remainder of this article. This does not challenge the categorization of English as satellite-framed. As Talmy (2017:4) has always recognized, “every language may exhibit a certain variety” of patterns for motion expression, though only one of these (i.e., *He ran into the room*, in the case of English) will be found to occur pervasively across a range of text types, both oral and written.<sup>1</sup>

## 4. Lexical and Grammatical Developments in EModE and LModE

### 4.1. Changes in English Motion Expressions and Motion Vocabulary

The study of how languages represent motion has been a prolific area of research for several decades, particularly with regard to synchronic differences across languages and language families (see, e.g., Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2017). Diachronic studies are far less numerous, but those published on English (Fanego 2012, 2017, 2019; Huber 2017; Perek 2018) have revealed a number of important facts about the dramatic increase in what Slobin (2017:440) describes as “verb descriptivity.” This development, which is directly connected to cognitive factors relating to the typological status of English as a satellite-framed language, has been discussed at length elsewhere (Fanego 2012, 2017:55–64). The enormous expansion of the inventory of English descriptive verbs is relevant to the discussion here, since it pertains to kinds of predicates that figure prominently in the VVingOBL construction, namely verbs of manner of motion (RUN, SCAMPER, TIPTOE, etc.), of sound emission (CLINK, CRASH, SPLASH, etc.), and of sounds emitted via the vocal tract (LAUGH, SING, WHISTLE, etc.).

Starting with verbs of manner, Fanego (2012, 2017:41) showed that the English domain of manner of motion has constantly been on the increase, with impressively large additions of new verbs in each historical period, especially since 1500. Though Old English (OE) was already rich in such verbs, with some seventy-two manner of motion verbs attested before 1100, 181 new verbs were added to the lexicon in Middle English (ME), another 205 in EModE, and about 250 more between 1700 and 1900. This explains why English ranks as one of the top languages for lexical diversity in this domain of experience (see, e.g., Slobin 2017:426-428).

As regards sound emission verbs, these also constitute an area of the English lexicon that has undergone important changes (Fanego 2017). With sound emission verbs (henceforth, CLINK verbs), the sound results from the motion, that is, it is not emitted via the vocal tract of an animate entity (as is the case with LAUGH, SING, WHISTLE, etc.). Two examples of CLINK verbs are CLINK itself, as in (9) above, and SCREAM, as in (15); in both cases the co-event conflated in the motion clause is concurrent result, as defined earlier.

- (15) the regiment retired swiftly into the zeriba, while the shells from the gunboats *screamed* overhead. (CLMET3.03, 1899, Churchill, *The river war*; cf. *OED*, s.v. *scream* v. 1.c. ‘of an inanimate thing: to travel swiftly with a screaming noise’)

As happened with manner of motion verbs, the inventory of CLINK verbs in English has expanded considerably. Thus, Fanego (2017:52-53, 58-61) lists thirty-seven new CLINK verbs dating from 1500 onwards, such as FIZZ (1685), PATTTER (1611), SPATTER (1586), SPLASH (1699), SWISH (1756), THUMP (1563), WHIZZ (1547), ZIP (1852).

Turning finally to verbs denoting sounds emitted via the vocal tract, such as BARK, LAUGH, SING, WHISTLE, etc. (henceforth, LAUGH verbs), which can be used in motion expressions coding a co-event of concomitance, as in (1) (“the merry little group *went laughing* up the stairs”), these were not examined in my earlier research, but there are indications that many of these are also relatively recent in the language and that their frequency has increased overall. Thus, my findings on the VVingOBL construction include a number of LAUGH verbs dating from 1500 onwards such as COO (1672), CROAK (1550), GROWL (1671), GRUMBLE (a1586), HOLLOW ‘to cry out loud’ (1542), SNUFFLE ‘to snuff or smell at a thing’ (1601), TITTER (a1625), WHIMPER (1513), YAP (1668) (see also Urban & Ruppenhofer 2001; Bouso 2017, 2020).

This greatly enlarged inventory of verbs describing manners of motion in particular, and manners of action in general, provided the raw material for use in English motion constructions; there are essentially three of these: “the Intransitive Motion construction” (IMC; Goldberg 1995:3, 78; Fanego 2017), as in (16), “the *Way* construction” (Goldberg 1995:199-218; Fanego 2019), as in (17), and “the VVingOBL construction” as in (18).

- (16) I drove [. . .] my sword full into the big man’s breast. His bullet *whizzed past my ear* [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1894, Hope, *The prisoner of Zenda*) [co-event: concurrent result]



- (17) I have now been something like five hours on the tramp, *plodding my way* through a deep glen in a pine forest [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1890, *Punch*, 16 August) [co-event: manner of motion]
- (18) [. . .] silence sank upon the whole troop, and they *went splashing on through the deep lanes*, in mud and mire [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1870, Yonge, *The caged lion*) [co-event: concurrent result]

Both the IMC and the *Way* construction underwent profound quantitative and qualitative changes over the EModE and LModE periods as a result of the need to integrate into the grammar the many new verbs designating various manners of action (Fanego 2017, 2019). The *Way* construction, for instance, has come to be employed quite frequently from the late nineteenth century onwards to code a relation of concomitance (see especially Perek 2018:82, 86-87; Fanego 2019:693-695). As already pointed out in section 3, this relationship is incompatible with the IMC. In other words, verbs of the LAUGH type can indicate motion only when inserted in the constructional frame of the *Way* construction, as in (19) or, alternatively, in the VVingOBL construction, as in (20).

- (19) A favourite animal, white as snow, brought by one of the visitors, *purred* its way gracefully among the wine-cups [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1885, Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*)
- (20) [. . .] these grand forests were almost silent, except when a huge animal something like a gigantic newt or frog *went croaking* through the marsh, (CLMET3.03, 1879, Buckley, *The fairy-land of science*)

In view of the above observations, the hypothesis is put forward here that the VVingOBL construction will also reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, the changes that have taken place in the English lexicon of manners of action, and that its frequency of use will increase over time, as has happened, quite prominently, with the *Way* construction and with some subtypes of the IMC (Fanego 2017, 2019).

#### 4.2. Developments in the BE Progressive

Instances that appear to prefigure the modern BE progressive can be found as early as OE (Los 2015:77-81). But, it is generally accepted that such early instances, many of which are stative or appear to be chosen for “remarkable situations in a narrative” (Kranich 2010:89), shared the form, but not the function, of the modern progressive. By the beginning of EModE, however, marking “ongoingness” and progressive aspect had become the construction’s dominant function, as it still is today. In this regard, it is interesting to compare examples of the progressive with instances of the VVingOBL construction involving the same verb or verbs, as this comparison allows us to observe the degree of semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic overlap between the two constructions. Thus, in (21) and (22), both occur in backgrounded adverbial clauses that



provide a setting or frame for the situation in the main clause, a discourse environment where the BE progressive has been frequent since the fifteenth century, as discussed by Petré (2016:45-46). (See also 20.)

- (21) [S]he was abruptly interrupted by our carriage suddenly coming to a full stop. The moon was still high in the heavens, [. . .] as we *were creaking and jolting* up the very steep main street of a place whose name I have forgotten [. . .] (CLMET3.03, 1885, Blind, *Tarantella*)
- (22) [. . .] when I *went creaking* up the winding back staircase to the two attics and looked in through their respective doors [. . .] I did not go right in (BNC, 1991, Beechey, *The reluctant Samaritan*) [Co-event: concurrent result]

Using data from the ARCHER corpus, Kranich (2010:95) shows that the frequency of the progressive rose steeply from the seventeenth century onwards, the most noticeable increase found in the second half of the nineteenth century (Kranich 2010:95, 242, 251). She also reports frequency differences in terms of text type, with fiction and drama in particular favoring the use of the progressive (Kranich 2010:101, 251). In this respect, too, the BE progressive has much in common with the VVingOBL construction, as will be seen in section 7.

Overall, it can thus be said that the BE progressive and the VVingOBL construction share semantic, syntactic, and textual space, so that the marked increase in frequency of the former construction during the ModE period may conceivably have served to promote and reinforce the development of the latter, far less frequent construction. On the other hand, the success of VVingOBL may have been assisted as well by its ability to express telic motion (i.e., directed toward a goal, as in “Jane *came walking* into the room”) much more readily than the BE progressive, or to occur in a functional slot from which the BE progressive is excluded, namely clauses with verb-second order after an initial adverbial or presentational *there* (Bækken 1998; Los 2015:184-214); witness the ungrammaticality of sequences such as “\**Here is coming* the bus” or “\**Up the hill was walking* John” (see Huddleston & Pullum 2002:128, 1388, 1390). Dynamic events of this kind have to be coded instead either by means of the simple tenses (“Here *comes* the bus”) or by means of the VVingOBL pattern, which has been attested in this use since OE, as shown in (23) and (24). (See also 26 and 29 in section 6.)

- (23) two of his cosyns leid them in an enbussment fast by the castel of tyntagyl in armes / and as by fortune *there came rydyng*e Kyng Marke and foure of his neuwes (EEBO, 1485, Malory, *Le morte d'Arthur*)
- (24) And while he was resting, *over the hill came flying* the dark Swift, screaming as he went, “News! News!” (BNC, 1987, Adams, *Watership down*)

Though not very important quantitatively,<sup>2</sup> in this particular functional niche, the VVingOBL construction is thus complementary to the BE progressive and constitutes a useful device to express imperfectivity and ongoingness.

5. Data Sources and Methods

As in my earlier research on the development of various motion patterns in the history of English (Fanego 2012, 2017, 2019), the analysis of the VVingOBL construction and its precursors since OE draws on data gathered from a variety of sources. For usage in Old and Early Middle English, I relied chiefly on Ogura (2002) and Visser (1963-1973:III/1 1391-1400, III/2 1906-1912). These sources were supplemented with the following reference works: the *Dictionary of Old English (DOE)*, the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*, and the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*.

The quantitative data were retrieved from several large electronic corpora of British English.<sup>3</sup> For LME and EModE, I use EEBO BYU (Davies 2017), focusing on decades 1470s-1490s (6,411,570 words), decades 1550s and 1570s considered together (34,146,652 words), and the 1640s (47,129,000 words). As the main source on usage in LModE, I have employed the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, version 3.0 (CLMET3.0; De Smet, Diller & Tyrkkö 2013). CLMET3.0 is a collection of texts comprising six major genres, as indicated in Table 1. In total, the corpus contains thirty-four million words of running text, of which 15,784,689 words are from narrative fiction. Because of its size and composition, CLMET3.0 provides a solid basis for research on motion events, especially given the intimate connection between fiction and frequency of motion descriptions (cf. Slobin 2004, 2017:423).

Finally, the BNC BYU (100 million words; Davies 2004-), which covers the years 1980-1993, was selected to represent late twentieth century usage. Like CLMET3.0, the BNC consists of several text categories, namely Fiction\_prose, Fiction\_poetry, Fiction\_drama, Magazine, Newspaper, Non-Academic, Academic, and Miscellaneous; its text category Fiction\_prose (15,644,928 words) can be roughly equated with the category Narrative Fiction (15,784,689 words) in CLMET3.0, and is practically identical in size, so it offers a good basis for comparison.

In order to identify the verbs occurring most frequently in the VVingOBL construction in both earlier and contemporary English, I conducted searches in EEBO and the BNC, using the string `_vv*_v?g*_i*`, which retrieves any verb followed by *Ving* and a preposition. The search options were set to 1000 hits, grouped by lemmas; this very high figure (100 hits is the option selected for automatic searches in many

Table 1. Contents of CLMET3.0, per Subperiod

Text type	CLMET3.01 1710-1780	CLMET3.02 1780-1850	CLMET3.03 1850-1920	Total
Narrative fiction	4,642,670	4,830,718	6,311,301	15,784,689
Narrative non-fiction	1,863,855	1,940,245	958,410	4,762,510
Drama	407,885	347,493	607,401	1,362,779
Letters	1,016,745	714,343	479,724	2,210,812
Treatise	1,114,521	1,692,992	1,782,124	4,589,637
Other	1,434,755	1,759,796	2,481,247	5,675,798
Total	10,480,431	11,285,587	12,620,207	34,386,225

corpus-based studies) ensured the retrieval of a large number of relevant strings, in their various forms (e.g., *come running*, *comes running*, *came running*, *go wand(e)ring*, *goes wand(e)ring*, *goeth wandring*, *went wand(e)ring*, etc.).

In this way, the search in EEBO (1470s-1690s; 755,078,402 words) yielded a total of 8229 occurrences. After discarding purpose clauses (e.g., *come seeking for*), expeditionary GO (e.g., *go hunting*, *go shopping*, etc.), and a number of other cases not relevant to this study, such as complement clauses or aspectuals, the only three verbs found were COME, GO, and RUN.<sup>4</sup> In the case of the BNC (1980-1993; 100 million words) the number of occurrences came to 5435, with COME, GO, and FLEE as the only verbs attested in the construction; in other words, setting the options to 1000 hits did not yield any examples with RUN. Yet additional, more exhaustive searches in the BNC showed that in PDE RUN (107 occurrences) is indeed much more frequent overall in the construction than FLEE (17 occurrences). These findings are in accordance with the data in Matsumoto (2016:156, 160) and Broccias and Torre (2018:89), who list COME, GO, and RUN as the three verbs most frequently attested in their samples, as also with Goldberg's (2006) observations quoted in section 2.<sup>5</sup> The discussion that follows, which proceeds in chronological order, will therefore focus only on those three predicates; semantically, COME and GO are path verbs coding the deictic, one of the three components of path in Talmy's (2000:II, 53) formulation, while RUN is a general verb of manner of motion.

In the case of CLMET3.0, the combination of V with *Ving* was searched by means of WordSmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012) within a context window of one word to the right (i.e., \*ing 0L 1R). Total hits recorded for the search string in question came to 1344, of which 558 had to be discarded, as they corresponded to purpose clauses (e.g., *come looking for him*) and various other constructions not relevant to the study; this is based, therefore, on 786 tokens of the construction. In the case of the BNC, the search strings were the same employed for EEBO, as detailed in section 7.1, namely COME\_v?g\*, GO\_v?g\*, and RUN\_v?g\*. Total hits recorded came to 1501; after manual sorting, 872 of these were found to be instances of the VVingOBL construction.

## 6. The VVingOBL Construction and Its Precursors

The VVingOBL construction can be traced to two different, though related, OE constructions which express an action taking place simultaneously with that of the matrix verb. One contains a present participle (inflected in *-ende* in OE) and a superordinate verb of motion, as in (25). The other is a verb of motion and an uninflected infinitive, as in (26).

- (25) [. . .] him *com* ða *ridende* to sum arwurðe ridda sittende on snáwhwitum horse.  
'then a venerable rider came riding to him, sitting on a snow-white horse'  
(ÆC Hom II, 10 82.31; quoted from Ogura 2002:83)
- (26) [. . .] þa *com* þær *gan* in to me heofencund Wisdom [. . .]  
'then there came walking in toward me heavenly Philosophy'  
(Bo 3.8.15; quoted from Ogura 2002:82)

The first type—VVende sequences denoting event simultaneity—is examined at length by Visser (1963-1973:III/2 1906-1912) and Ogura (2002:80-88). They document its use with the verbs CUMAN ‘to come’ (cf. 25), FARAN ‘to go, travel,’ FERAN ‘to go, travel,’ FLEOGAN ‘to fly,’ GAN ‘to go, walk’ (DOE, s.v. *gan* I), HWEORFAN ‘to roam,’ and IRNAN/RINNAN ‘to run’ (cf. 28). To these we can add instances with SCRİÐAN ‘to go’ and SIGAN ‘to fall down’ (27), reported in Fanego (2017:49).

- (27) þæt hit *brastliende sah* to ðam halgan were. hetelice swiðe.  
 ‘so that it [the tree] fell crashing towards the holy man, very violently’  
 (ÆCHom II, 39.1 293.170; DOE, s.v. *brastlian* v. 3. ‘to make a crashing sound’)
- (28) [. . .] he *arn forhtigende* to Maure þam munuce.  
 ‘he ran trembling with fear to the monk Maure’  
 (GD 2 (C) 6.114.3; DOE, s.v. *forhtian*)

As will be seen, the verbs attested in OE correspond quite closely to those most commonly found, according to Goldberg (2006), in the modern VVingOBL construction (COME, GO, RUN, and TAKE *off* ‘to go off’). These are intransitive verbs of general meaning, some of them deictic, as is the case with CUMAN and GAN, in some of its uses in OE (cf. DOE, s.v. *gan* IV ‘of movement towards the speaker: to come’). With respect to the participles, the three types of co-events discussed in section 3 are attested, namely manner of motion (*ridende* ‘riding,’ in 25), concurrent result (*brastliende* ‘crashing,’ in 27), and concomitance (*forhtigende* ‘trembling with fear,’ in 28).

The OE VVende pattern therefore appears to exhibit most of the features of the modern VVingOBL construction (see, e.g., examples 1, 2, 10, 18, 20, and 22). The one (crucial) feature which cannot be determined is whether the higher verb and the participle already formed a unit of some kind in OE, as I will argue they do today (see section 8), or whether the participle should rather be taken as an adjunct clause of “accompanying circumstance, or exemplification/specification,” a possibility put forward by Ringe and Taylor (2014:494). The positional mobility of participles and participial phrases in OE was very great, as has often been noted in the literature (Mitchell 1985:§§1561-1564; Ringe & Taylor 2014:492), and as is illustrated in the above examples. On the other hand, the important cue of punctuation is generally lacking in the OE material, so that it is not possible to exclude, for instance, a reading of (28) above as two separate intonation units, with *forhtigende* representing an adjunct clause, i.e., ‘he ran, trembling with fear, to the monk Maure.’

As noted above, the second type of OE precursor to the VVingOBL construction is CUMAN + a bare infinitive denoting an ongoing action. The interchangeability of the uninflected infinitive with the present participle after OE verbs of motion has often been noted in the literature (Mustanoja 1960:536-537; Visser 1963-1973:1392-1393; Mitchell 1985:§1543; Ogura 2002:81-83; Los 2005:34; Ringe & Taylor 2014:488). A close look at the examples cited in these sources, and at the information provided in the DOE for the four motion verbs most common in OE (CUMAN ‘to come,’ FARAN ‘to go, travel,’ FERAN ‘to go, travel,’ GAN ‘to go, walk’; see Huber 2017:118-120), reveals, however, that *cuman* was in fact the only verb that was regularly used with a following

bare infinitive coding an ongoing, simultaneous action. Example (26) is one example; (29) is another.

- (29) þa        com        þær        færlice        yrnan        an þearle wod cu.  
          then        came        there        suddenly        run        one very mad cow  
          ‘then there suddenly came running a very mad cow.’  
          (ÆLS (Martin) 1039; DOE, s.v. *cuman* F.1)

Los (2015:22) draws attention to examples like this and argues that they constituted “one of the ways in which imperfective aspect and ongoing-ness” could be expressed in English before the rise of a grammaticalized progressive. The implication seems to be that in such uses the bare infinitive was “not an adjunct but an argument of the verb of motion” (Los 2005:35; see also Mitchell 1985:§1543), and that the verb (*CUMAN*) in such a construction was some kind of “auxiliary” (Los 2005:35). In earlier work, Los (1999:221) quite explicitly suggests for the verb form “a loss of lexical meaning, and a corresponding gain in the functional domain.” The question emerges, therefore, of whether the same parsing can be applied to the construction with a present participle examined above, which is impossible to decide in light of the evidence available in OE, as already pointed out.

For reasons that fall beyond the scope of this paper, the type *CUMAN* + infinitive becomes rarer towards the end of ME and eventually disappears, the place of the infinitive being taken by the present participle (Mustanoja 1960:536; Los 1999:222-224). The *MED*’s comprehensive entry for *COMEN* reflects this development well: sense 1c, ‘to approach or come (in a certain manner),’ is illustrated with twenty-seven different quotations. Of these, seventeen contain a form of *COMEN* + present participle (now ending in *-ing*), as in (30), and the remaining eleven contain a form of *COMEN* + infinitive.

- (30) the hunters [. . .] hereth hym *come russhyng* in the greues,  
          ‘the hunters [. . .] hear him [i.e., a lion] come rushing into the woods’  
          (c1385 Chaucer CT.Kn.(Manly-Rickert)A.1641; cf. *MED*, s.v. *in prep.* 8a(b)  
          ‘into (a town, forest, etc.)’)

## 7. The Development of the VVingOBL Construction from 1470 Onwards

### 7.1. 1470s-1640s

As discussed in section 5, the results from EEBO are based on the lemmatized search strings *COME\_v?g\**, *GO\_v?g\**, and *RUN\_v?g\**. This kind of search retrieves both instances where the oblique complement is explicit (e.g., *came running into the room*) and those where it is latent (e.g., *came running*), since it was thought that having information at hand on the latter subtype might prove useful. One disadvantage of this procedure was that a considerable amount of manual sorting was needed in order to quantify the number of actual VVingOBL examples attested in the six decades in EEBO (1470s, 1480s, 1490s, 1550s, 1570s, 1640s; see section 5) that were selected for analysis.

**Table 2.** Ving Types in LME

Ving types	Types/tokens	Verbs
COME VingOBL	9/51	RIDE (41) WALK (2) WEEP (2) DASH (1) ENTER (1) PRICK* (1) ROLL (1) RUSH (1) SHOULDER** (1)
GO VingOBL	3/5	RIDE (2) WEEP (2) WALK (1)
RUN VingOBL	1/2	WEEP (2)

\*OED, s.v. *prick*, v. 11.a. 'to ride, esp. fast.'

\*\*OED, s.v. *shoulder*, v. 4.b. 'to make one's way by pushing with the shoulders.'

As can be seen from Tables 2-6, despite the considerable size (87,687,222 words altogether) of the sample examined for LME and EModE, the number of occurrences of the construction is very low, with token frequencies per million words ranging, in the 1640s, from 6.09 for COMEVingOBL (by far the most frequent subtype at all times) to 2.12 and 0.57 for GO VingOBL and RUN VingOBL, respectively.<sup>6</sup> Before going on to discuss the main findings in this period in sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2, a few representative examples are presented in (31)–(35); the co-event conflated in each case is indicated in square brackets.

- (31) [. . .] and thenne the moder of the chylde *came wepyng* to the dore of pastor [. . .] (EEBO, 1483, de Voragine/Caxton, *Legenda aurea sanctorum*) [Concomitance]
- (32) [. . .] the prince of morocco, re-collecting all his force and all the opinion of his courage, *came thundring* on polexander, and broke his lance with a great deale of strength [. . .] (EEBO, 1647, Le Roy/Browne, *The history of Polexander*; OED, s.v. *thunder*, v. 2.a. 'to rush or fall with great noise and commotion') [Concurrent result]
- (33) [. . .] when we *goe groping* up and downe in the darke, [. . .] truth affoord us direction and consolation, (EEBO, 1642, Hill, *The trade of truth advanced*; OED, s.v. *grobe*, v. 2.a. 'to feel about in order to find one's way') [Manner of motion]
- (34) [. . .] this capitaine stoute, *went flaunting* too and fro, till loe (ill lucke) [. . .], he espyes, my gallant port, (EEBO, 1576, Whetstone, *The rocke of regard*; OED, s.v. *flaunt*, v. 2.a. 'to walk or move about so as to display one's finery') [Manner of motion]
- (35) [. . .] certainly jesus christ will never deny maintainance to his spouse, it's a dishonour for a husband to have the wife *go whining* up-and down; (EEBO, 1649, Burroughs, *The rare jewel of Christian contentment*) [Concomitance]

**Table 3.** *Ving* Types Recorded Four Times or More in EModE

<i>Ving</i> types	1550s & 1570s (34,146,652 w.)	1640s (47,120,000 w.)
COME <i>Ving</i> OBL	RUN (58)	RUN (41)
	RIDE (23)	FLOCK (18)
	FLOCK (20)	RIDE (18)
	FLY (14)	RUSH (15)
	RUSH (13)	TUMBLE (14)
	TUMBLE (10)	FLY (13)
	CREEP (8)	GALLOP (13)
	GALLOP (5)	LEAP (13)
	WEEP (4)	DROP (7)
		FLOAT (6)
		THRONG (6)
		DANCE (5)
		MARCH (5)
		THUNDER** (5)
		CREEP (4)
		CRY (4)
		POUR (4)
GO <i>Ving</i> OBL	WANDER (9)	STEAL* (4)
	SAIL (5)	WEEP (4)
		CRY (5)
		LAUGH (5)
		WANDER (5)
		WEEP (5)
		PLOD (4)
		WALK (4)

\*OED, s.v. *steal*, v.1 10.d. 'to come stealthily on or upon.'

\*\*OED, s.v. *thunder*, v. 2.a. 'to rush or fall with great noise and commotion.'

**7.1.1. *Ving*'s Attested and Prefabs.** The set of predicates occurring in the *Ving* slot in decades 1470s-1490s is very small, yet it is indicative to some extent of the *Ving*'s found in later periods. The set comprises the items displayed in Table 2; several of them are among those recorded most frequently (four times or more) in the following two centuries, as summarized in Table 3 relating to the 1550s-1570s and the 1640s.<sup>7</sup>

Aspects that deserve comment regarding the information in Tables 2 and 3 are, first, the fact that a majority (41 out of 51) of the instances of COME*Ving*OBL in the period 1470s-1490s contain the participle *riding*. A number of those instances are near duplicates (see note 6) found either in different editions (1480, 1482, 1485) of Caxton's *The chronicles of England* or in Malory's *Le morte d'Arthur* (1485; 21 occurrences). Though the pairing of COME and *riding* is attested in OE (see 25), its very high frequency in Malory is likely to reflect the fact that he was translating from French and Anglo-Norman sources, where the combination of ALLER 'go' with the gerunds *chevauchant* and *galopant* (i.e., ALLER *chevauchant*, ALLER *galopant*) was common, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer (see also Gougenheim 1929:3, 11). The figures



for COME *riding* OBL in LME are therefore probably somewhat inflated, but there can be little doubt that it was a high-frequency collocation at the time, as confirmed by the sixteenth and seventeenth century data in Table 3.

In addition to *riding*, a few other *Ving*'s occur with considerable frequency in combination with COME as verb. This applies in particular to *running*, which is the most frequent participle by far throughout the periods examined, totals for the collocation COME *running* OBL being as follows: 58 (1550s-1570s), 41 (1640s), 45 (CLMET3.01, 1710-1780), 46 (CLMET3.03, 1850-1920), 75 (BNC Fiction\_prose, 1980-1993). Such figures suggest that COME *running*, COME *riding*, and a few other high-frequency collocations in this period could be considered “prefabs” (Bybee & Torres Cacoullos 2009), that is, “conventionalised multi-word strings” which interact with “the more general constructions that make up the grammar of a language” (Bybee & Torres Cacoullos 2009:188). Prefabs have been shown to participate in various ways in the process of grammaticalization of different constructions, because, since they are the most frequent member of a given construction, they can promote its productivity by “serving as the loci for extensions of the construction” (Bybee & Torres Cacoullos 2009:212) via associated semantic classes.

**Table 4.** Historical Development of COME*Ving*OBL (Frequencies Normalized per Million Words within Parentheses)

Frequency	1470-1490	1550s & 1570s	1640s	1710-1780	1850-1920	1980-1993 Fiction prose
Types	9 (1.4)	61 (1.79)	80 (1.7)	59 (5.63)	159 (12.6)	202 (12.91)
Tokens	51 (7.9)	226 (6.62)	287 (6.09)	149 (14.22)	433 (34.31)	644 (41.16)

**Table 5.** Historical Development of go*Ving*OBL (Frequencies Normalized per Million Words within Parentheses)

Frequency	1470s-1490s	1550s & 1570s	1640s	1710-1780	1850-1920	1980-1993 Fiction prose
Types	3 (0.47)	41 (1.2)	55 (1.17)	24 (2.29)	109 (8.64)	112 (7.16)
Tokens	5 (0.78)	60 (1.76)	100 (2.12)	27 (2.58)	147 (11.65)	205 (13.10)

**Table 6.** Historical Development of RUN*Ving*OBL (Frequencies Normalized per Million Words within Parentheses)

Frequency	1470s-1490s	1550s & 1570s	1640s	1710-1780	1850-1920	1980-1993 Fiction prose
Types	1 (0.16)	18 (0.53)	23 (0.49)	16 (1.53)	13 (1.03)	16 (1.02)
Tokens	2 (0.31)	20 (0.59)	27 (0.57)	16 (1.53)	14 (1.11)	23 (1.47)

Tracing in detail the extension of V*Ving*OBL from *COME running*, *COME riding*, and the like to other semantically related predicates exceeds the limits of the present paper, but the status of those strings as prefabs helps to explain why occurrences of the construction with a latent oblique (e.g., “an attendant came running”; see example 6) are found mostly with the most frequent *Ving*’s, and in particular with *riding* and *running*. Thus, in the period 1550s-1570s, there are thirty cases of latent obliques, out of which six occur with *come riding* and twelve with *come running*. In the 1640s the figures for these two high-frequency collocations are, respectively, 18 OBL/9 latent and 41 OBL/9 latent. And in the BNC (Fiction\_prose), there are overall 644 tokens of *COME Ving*OBL, as against only 45 tokens of *COME Ving*; 31 of the latter involve the collocation *COME running*. I interpret these findings as a reflection of the fact that *COME riding* and *COME running*, as frequent collocations, have become automated as single processing units specialized in coding motion along a path and towards a goal, and therefore can carry this interpretation by default, irrespective of whether the oblique is or is not explicit (on this issue, see Bybee 2003:617-618). Likewise, the routinization of frequent collocations is probably behind the fact that *riding* and *running* occur nearly always with *COME* as V; thus, instances of *GO running* OBL are not found in my data from EEBO and CLMET3.0, while in the BNC there are only eight examples, as against seventy-five with *COME*.

**7.1.2. Zooming in on the Semantics of *goVing*OBL.** The *goVing*OBL pattern differs fundamentally from the *COME Ving*OBL pattern not just in being much less frequent throughout the history of English, as is apparent from Tables 4 and 5, but also in terms of some of its semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic properties. These seem to arise partly from the fact that OE *GAN* and its reflex in ME *GON* were not yet the functional equivalents of PDE (deictic) *GO*, but rather verbs often restricted to movement or travel on foot, irrespective of the point of departure or destination (cf. *DOE*, s.v. *gan*, v. 1.1. ‘to go on foot, walk’; *MED*, s.v. *gon*, v. 1.a ‘to walk’ & 2.a ‘to travel, proceed’; *OED*, s.v. *go*, v. 1.a. ‘to walk; to move or travel on foot’ & 2.a. ‘to move, travel, journey [by any form of locomotion]’). In keeping with this semantic profile, *GO* is not uncommonly found in ME in uses which encode non-oriented motion and are essentially frequentative, as in (36) and (37).

- (36) Wommen may *go* [i.e., ‘walk’] saufly *vp and down*. (c1395 Chaucer CT.WB. (Manly-Rickert).D.878; *MED*, s.v. *gon* 1.a)
- (37) *Ȝoure aduersarie* [. . .] as a roryng lyoun *goith* aboute, sekinge whom he shal deuoure. (c1384 WBible(1) (Roy 1.B.6)1 Pet.5.8; *MED*, s.v. *gon* 2.a)

These kinds of usages help to explain, first, why the *Ving*’s most frequently occurring in the *goVing*OBL pattern (see Table 3) are verbs which in themselves often refer to relatively aimless motion, such as *SAIL* and *WANDER* (on *SAIL* see Levin 1993:268, who notes that “no specific direction of motion is implied unless there is an explicit directional phrase present”); second, why in my EMode data *GO Ving*OBL is very frequently

combined with obliques which, rather than encoding the goal of motion as in (38), encode a trajectory over an extended location, as in (39).

- (38) [. . .] the corsegnans *went wandring towards the army*, in so much as not only the region of calabria was left in daunger, but also it was feared least the victors would aduance [. . .] (EEBO, 1579, Guicciardini / Fenton, *The historie of Guicciardin containing the warres of Italie and other partes*)
- (39) [. . .] they procured him besides, the ill will and displeasure of all the friendes and confederates of the athenians, for that he *went sayling still to and fro* alongest the Iles, exacting money of the inhabitants of the same [. . .] (EEBO, 1579, Plutarch / North, *The lives of the noble Grecians and Romanes*)

Other examples of the extended trajectory category include *about all the countrey* (1572), *euery where* (1579), *fro Prouince to Prouince* (1579), *from common welth to common welth* (1575), *here and thare* (1553), *through places and Countryes* (1647), *to and fro* (passim), *up and down* (passim) (see also 33-35 above). Overall, in the decades 1550s-1570s, 26 (43.3 percent) out of the 60 tokens of goVingOBL recorded contain obliques of this type. By the 1640s, the proportion of obliques indicating an extended location is still considerable, and, as previously, the locative *up and down* (eighteen occurrences) continues to be especially frequent.

Aimless, non-oriented motion is apt to be colored with negative overtones. This can be observed quite consistently, for instance, in the Spanish progressive periphrasis formed with ANDAR 'to go around' and a gerund, as in *andar golfeando* 'to go hanging around.' It is also evident in many attested examples of the goVingOBL pattern, both in EModE and at later stages. Examples (33)-(35) illustrate this point, as do (39)-(42). Note that the negative semantic prosody (Sinclair 2004:33-35) which often characterizes the goVingOBL pattern has become sufficiently conventionalized as to apply irrespective of whether the oblique complement codes an extended trajectory (39 and 40) or a goal (41 and 42). Also worthy of note is the co-occurrence in (40) of the construction with the so-called modal use of the BE progressive, which is employed as an expressive device to convey negative speaker attitude (see Kranich 2010: 202, 222).

- (40) [. . .] make wicked and ungodly men affraid of you: let not drunkards dare to *goe reeling and staggering in the streets*; [. . .] nor children & others dare to be playing up & down the streets on the lords day: (EEBO, 1645, Blackwell, *A caveat for magistrates*) [Co-event: manner of motion]
- (41) [. . .] what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, [. . .], *to go simpering up to the Altar*; (CLMET3.01, 1775, Sheridan, *The rivals*) [Co-event: concomitance]
- (42) [. . .] she had never worn a strapless dress before, and [. . .] she couldn't rid herself of the fear that the dress would *go slithering to the floor* at some critical moment, leaving her almost naked, like in a bad dream. (BNC, 1993, Darcy, *A private arrangement*) [Co-event: manner of motion]

## 7.2. LModE (1710-1920) and PDE (1980-1993)

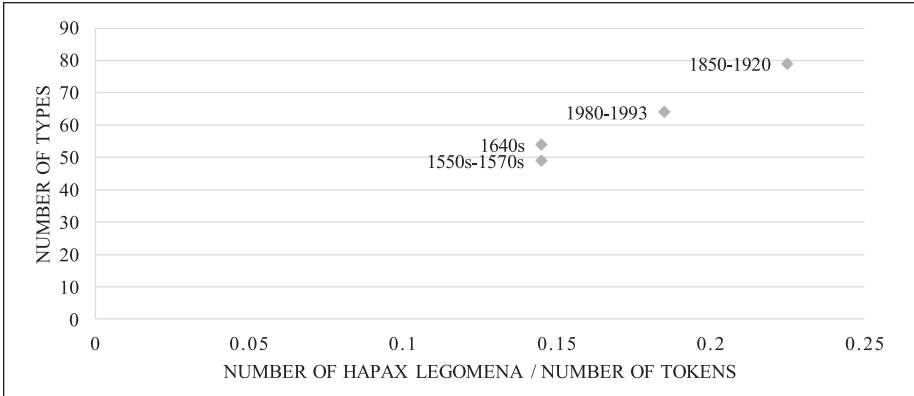
Tables 4-6 present the data obtained for COME, GO, and RUN on the basis of CLMET3.0, subperiods 1 (1710-1780) and 3 (1850-1920), and of the text category Fiction\_prose in the BNC BYU; the reasons for singling out this specific text category for the analysis in the BNC are expounded in section 7.2.3.

Tables 4-5 reveal considerable increases in the frequency of the VVingOBL construction over time in the case of COME and GO, with the greatest relative growth coinciding with the second half of the nineteenth century, that is, with the period that witnesses the most noticeable increase also in the case of the BE progressive, as pointed out in section 4.2. For COME, type frequencies per million words rise from 1.7 in the 1640s, to 5.63 in subperiod 1 of CLMET3.0, 12.6 in subperiod 3, and 12.91 in the BNC. Normalized token frequencies have also increased quite considerably from the seventeenth century onwards:  $6.09 > 14.22 > 34.31 > 41.16$ . For GO, the increase is even more notable, with normalized token frequencies shifting from 2.58 in subperiod 1 of CLMET3.0 to 11.65 in subperiod 3 and to 13.10 in the BNC, so that the GOVing pattern has now largely ceased to be the marginal pattern it was before. RUN, however, has not shared in the increase, but rather the opposite: its type frequency per million words has decreased ( $1.53 > 1.03 > 1.02$ ), and much the same applies to token frequency ( $1.53 > 1.11 > 1.47$ ).<sup>8</sup> These findings suggest that by the end of the LModE period and in PDE the VVingOBL construction can be described, essentially, as consisting of a deictic schematic verb of motion—either COME or GO—followed by an *-ing* participle and an oblique complement; other verbs, such as RUN, are clearly marginal. The implications of this will be discussed in section 8.2.

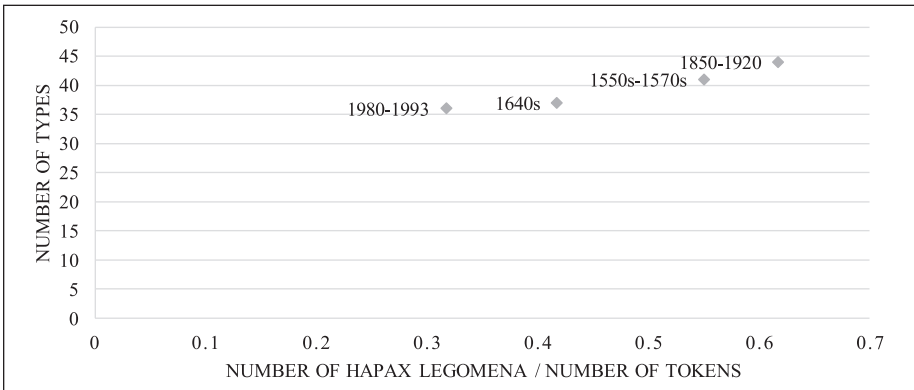
**7.2.1. Productivity.** This section complements the preceding information on type and token frequency by looking at productivity, “the likelihood that a construction will apply to a new item” (Bybee 2010:94). Productivity has been studied in the morphological domain more than any other (Baayen & Lieber 1991; Baayen 1992), and increasingly with regard to morphosyntactic constructions as well, in order to assess their degree of “entrenchment” (Langacker 1987:59-60) or of grammaticalization (see, e.g., Coussé, Andersson & Olofsson 2018).

I have followed the method for measuring syntactic productivity employed by Petré (2012) in the study of the English BECOME and WAX copulas, which has been adopted also in studies of constructional change such as Lesuisse and Lemmens (2018) and Perek (2018). Figures 2 and 3 present the results for the COME and GO subpatterns of the VVingOBL construction. In Figure 2, the Y-axis gives the number of types in a random selection of 200 tokens of COMEVingOBL in four subperiods: 1550s-1570s, 1640s, 1850-1920, and 1980-1993 (the other two subperiods examined in this article are not included in the graph because of too low frequencies). The X-axis provides the productivity rate proposed in Baayen and Lieber (1991), which consists of dividing the number of *hapax legomena* (types that occur only once in the sample) by the total number of tokens. The productivity of the construction is thus represented in the graph by the combination of these two productivity indices, a combination which Baayen (1992) calls “global productivity.” In turn, Figure 3 presents the data corresponding to

goVingOBL, based on a 60-token sample in each of four subperiods; the lower number of occurrences selected for analysis follows from the much lower frequency of this subpattern, as compared with COMEVingOBL. In both figures, if the X value equals 1 (which is not the case for any of the two sub-patterns), this means that the construction's types are all hapaxes. Finally, and also by way of clarification, a cluster of points in the top right-hand corner reflects a high global productivity, as it implies a high number of types as well as a high productivity rate.



**Figure 2.** Global Productivity for COMEVingOBL



**Figure 3.** Global Productivity for goVingOBL

As can be observed, for both subpatterns of the construction the peak in global productivity (i.e., the combination of type productivity plus productivity rate) coincides with LModE (1850-1920), a finding which is in agreement with the frequencies displayed in Tables 4 and 5. In 1980-1993 the productivity rate for COMEVingOBL and goVingOBL decreases, and so does the number of types. This can be interpreted as a result of entrenchment, that is, the presence in the BNC data of a large number of high-frequency recurring collocations (e.g., *come bursting/crashing/flooding/hurrying/run-*

*ning/rushing/striding/tumbling; go charging/crashing/running/rushing/storming/wandering*), something that, especially in the case of GO, did not happen before (see section 7.2.2). Overall, type productivity is high for both sub-patterns; global productivity is much higher for the GO pattern than for the COME pattern, which is apparent as well in Table 5: note that from the first subperiod considered in this paper (1470s-1490s) GO allows collocation with a large number of types, relative to its number of tokens in each subperiod. One explanation for this difference in behavior, which needs to be confirmed by further research, might be that GO was felt to have a higher degree of desemanticization, or loss of lexical meaning (see section 8.1), than COME, and was resorted to more readily as a supporting V in contexts where the motion dimension was of little importance (see, e.g., 42).

**7.2.2. Interaction with Co-Event Type.** This section is concerned with the correlation between the VVingOBL construction and the type of co-event it encodes. In a recent analysis of various kinds of VVing sequences in PDE based on COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), Broccias and Torre (2018:89-90) suggest that RUN occurs most frequently with non-manner of motion V-ing's, a result that Table 7 based on my own data, confirms to be largely correct. RUN, itself a verb of manner of motion, naturally lends itself well to conflation with non-motion activities that take place concomitantly with motion, such as howling, laughing, smiling, squeaking, and yelling. Yet conflation of RUN with expressive, less common manner of motion verbs, such as *drip* 'to fall in drops' in (43), can also be found.

- (43) The sunward sides of the tree-stems took a glow, and the dew that *ran dripping* down their mossy sides trickled blood-red to earth. (CLMET3.03, 1905, Arnold, *Gulliver of Mars*)

As regards COME and GO, the data in Tables 8 and 9 show that until well into the eighteenth century GO is combined with V-ing's coding concomitance much more often than COME: over the period 1710-1780 62.5 percent of the types of GOVingOBL (and 62.9 percent of its tokens) code a relation of concomitance, while only 33.3 percent code manner of motion. But as the VVingOBL construction increases in frequency from the nineteenth century onwards, the differences in this respect between COME and GO virtually disappear. In CLMET3.03 (1850-1920) the percentages of occurrence of COME and GO with co-events of manner of motion are 71.7 and 71.5 respectively. Much the same applies to the BNC, with percentages for manner of motion of 75.7 (for COME) and 77.6 (for GO). In terms of Himmelmann's (2004) formulation of grammaticalization as a process of context expansion at different levels, the development of GO just outlined illustrates the kind of expansion that Himmelmann has termed "host-class expansion," since the class of elements that GO "is in construction with, i.e., the host class" (2004:32) has been expanded to include a much larger number of verbs of manner of motion than before; crucially, among these are items that can be considered prototypes of the class, such as RUN and RUSH, which from the start co-occur very frequently with COME (see Table 3), but are unattested with GO prior to the late nineteenth (RUSH, 1885) and twentieth (RUN, 1980-1993) centuries.

**Table 7.** Historical Development of RUN*Ving*OBL, by Co-Event (Percentages per Period Totals within Parentheses)

Co-Event	1470s-1490s (types/tokens)	1550s & 1570s (types/tokens)	1640s (types/tokens)	1710-1780 (types/tokens)	1850-1920 (types/tokens)	1980-1993 Fiction prose (types/tokens)
Manner of motion	0/0	14 (77.8%)/ 16 (80.0%)	16 (69.6%)/ 17 (63.0%)	9 (56.25%)/ 9 (56.25%)	6 (46.1%)/ 6 (42.9%)	4 (25.0%)/ 4 (17.4%)
Concurrent result	0/0	0/0	1 (4.35%)/ 1 (3.7%)	1 (6.25%)/ 1 (6.25%)	0/0	1 (6.25%)/ 1 (4.35%)
Concomitance	1 (100%)/ 2 (100%)	4 (22.2%)/ 4 (20.0%)	6 (26.1%)/ 9 (33.3%)	6 (37.5%)/ 6 (37.5%)	7 (53.8%)/ 8 (57.1%)	11 (68.8%)/ 18 (78.3%)

**Table 8.** Historical Development of come*Ving*OBL by Co-Event (Percentages per Period Totals within Parentheses)

Co-Event	1470s-1490s (types/tokens)	1550s & 1570s (types/tokens)	1640s (types/tokens)	1710-1780 (types/tokens)	1850-1920 (types/tokens)	1980-1993 Fiction prose (types/tokens)
Manner of motion	8 (88.88%)/ 49 (96.1%)	49 (80.33%)/ 210 (92.92%)	63 (78.75%)/ 256 (89.2%)	43 (72.88%)/ 130 (87.25%)	114 (71.7%)/ 363 (83.84%)	153 (75.74%)/ 563 (87.42%)
Concurrent result	0/0	1 (1.63%)/ 1 (0.44%)	5 (6.25%)/ 10 (3.48%)	4 (6.78%)/ 6 (4.03%)	21 (13.21%)/ 39 (9%)	29 (14.36%)/ 59 (9.16%)
Concomitance	1 (11.11%)/ 2 (3.9%)	11 (18.03%)/ 15 (6.64%)	12 (15%)/ 21 (7.32%)	12 (20.34%)/ 13 (8.72%)	24 (15.09%)/ 31 (7.16%)	20 (9.9%)/ 22 (3.42%)

**Table 9.** Historical Development of go*Ving*OBL, by Co-Event (Percentages per Period Totals within Parentheses)

Co-Event	1470s-1490s (types/tokens)	1550s & 1570s (types/tokens)	1640s (types/tokens)	1710-1780 (types/tokens)	1850-1920 (types/tokens)	1980-1993 Fiction prose (types/tokens)
Manner of motion	2 (66.7%)/ 3 (60.0%)	28 (68.3%)/ 44 (73.3%)	29 (52.7%)/ 51 (51.0%)	8 (33.33%)/ 9 (33.33%)	78 (71.55%)/ 111 (75.5%)	87 (77.68%)/ 170 (82.9%)
Concurrent result	0/0	0/0	1 (1.8%)/ 1 (1.0%)	1 (4.17%)/ 1 (3.7%)	14 (12.84%)/ 16 (10.9%)	12 (10.7%)/ 21 (10.24%)
Concomitance	1 (33.3%)/ 2 (40.0%)	13 (31.7%)/ 16 (26.7%)	25 (45.5%)/ 48 (48.0%)	15 (62.5%)/ 17 (62.96%)	17 (15.6%)/ 20 (13.6%)	13 (11.6%)/ 14 (6.8%)

I will conclude this overview of co-event types with a few comments on the relation of concomitance. As a co-event not causally related to the motion, concomitance is quite flexible; in other words, the range of possible concomitant activities that can be performed while moving is virtually open-ended. Yet the great majority of cases of concomitance coding by *Ving* in my data denote fairly concrete physical activities that can accompany motion, such as the emission of sounds via the vocal tract (e.g., *bawl*, *bellow*, *cluck*), gestures and other forms of nonverbal expression (e.g., *smile*, *sob*, *stare*), and bodily processes and body-internal states of existence (e.g., *blush*, *shiver*, *shudder*; for these verb classes, see Levin 1993:223). Occasionally, however, more abstract activities can also be found, as in (44).



**Table 10.** COMeVingOBL in Fiction (Frequencies Normalized per Million Words within Parentheses)

Frequency	1710-1780	1850-1920	1980-1993
Types	42 (9.04)	145 (22.97)	202 (12.91)
Tokens	112 (24.12)	324 (51.34)	644 (41.16)

**Table 11.** goVingOBL in Fiction (Frequencies Normalized per Million Words within Parentheses)

Frequency	1710-1780	1850-1920	1980-1993
Types	18 (3.88)	87 (13.78)	112 (7.16)
Tokens	20 (4.3)	114 (18.06)	205 (13.10)

(44) Boldwood *went meditating* down the slopes with his eyes on his boots,  
(CLMET3.03, 1874, Hardy, *Far from the madding crowd*)

7.2.3. *Interaction with Text Type.* EEBO BYU lacks codification for text type and so cannot be used to examine the effect of this variable. By contrast, both CLMET3.0 and the BNC are organized into different text categories, enabling me to check whether the growth in frequency of VVingOBL applies to all of them or rather correlates with one or more. As motion clauses in general are known to occur often in fiction and narrative (e.g., Slobin 2004), I compare the category Fiction\_prose (15,644,928 words) in the BNC to the corresponding text category, Narrative Fiction, in subperiods 1 (4,642,670 words) and 3 (6,311,301 words) of CLMET3.0. The results are displayed in Tables 10 and 11. When compared with the data in Tables 4 and 5, they confirm that the frequency of the VVingOBL construction in LModE is considerably higher when Fiction is considered separately than when all six text types represented in CLMET3.0 are considered together. In this respect, therefore, the construction once more has affinities with the BE progressive: by the second half of the nineteenth century, progressives were most frequent in Fiction (Kranich 2010:101-102).

Tables 10 and 11 reveal as well that from subperiod 3 (1850-1920) of CLMET3.0 to the late twentieth century as represented in the BNC, the VVingOBL construction decreased in Fiction rather than increased. The frequencies for both COME and GO in the BNC, however, remain considerably higher than those attested in subperiod 1 (1710-1780) of CLMET3.0. Overall it can be said that the VVingOBL construction has been gaining ground all along the history of English, as was my initial hypothesis (see section 4.1). A more detailed analysis of late twentieth century usage than is possible here seems in order to determine whether changes in narrative style and discourse conventions may be responsible for the observed decrease of the construction in PDE fictional prose, when compared with late nineteenth century usage.

## 8. The VVingOBL Construction in Relation to Grammaticalization and Serialization

As discussed in section 2, Goldberg (2006:52) argues that the VVingOBL pattern is a construction in the sense of CxG, that is, a form-meaning pairing whose overall event meaning can be glossed as ‘move in a manner along a path.’ The corpus-based study presented here enables us to refine this characterization and propose that the construction codes ‘deictic motion along a path, which takes place simultaneously with a manner of action involving manner of motion proper, concurrent result, or concomitance.’

The question to be examined in 8.1 is whether this particular form-meaning pairing exhibits any of the features commonly associated with grammaticalization. Grammaticalization is closely intertwined with serialization. The discussion in 8.1 serves as a point of departure for the analysis of the VVingOBL construction from the perspective of serialization which follows in section 8.2.

### 8.1. Grammaticalization

Over the past ten or fifteen years, efforts have been made to integrate insights from work on grammaticalization (Lehmann 1995; Hopper & Traugott 2003) and (diachronic) construction grammar (Traugott & Trousdale 2013; Barðdal, Smirnova, Sommerer & Gildea 2015; Coussé, Andersson & Olofsson 2018), in order to advance our understanding of constructional change. Based on previous research, I review the features that characterize the VVingOBL construction in terms of grammaticalization.

An increase in frequency has long been recognized as a concomitant of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 2003:126-127; Kranich 2010:250), since the kinds of changes that are most characteristic of grammaticalization, as discussed below, “are inseparable from the absolute frequency of the forms and the frequency with which they cooccur with other forms” (Hopper & Traugott 2003:127). Frequency is intertwined with productivity, in that as constructions grammaticalize they tend to become more productive. As seen in section 7, both increases in frequency and in productivity can be observed in the development of the VVingOBL construction since LME.

The parameter of desemanticization (Lehmann 1995:127-128), also often termed semantic bleaching, can be seen at work in processes of auxiliatization (i.e., the development of lexical verbs into auxiliaries), and relates to the degree in which one of the verb forms involved is bleached of lexical meaning. It applies very clearly, for instance, to the VVing sequence discussed in section 2 as modality GO (“Don’t *go behaving* like that to poor Freddy!”), where the motion verb GO has been stripped of its spatial dimension to develop into an auxiliary of evaluative modality. By contrast, in the VVingOBL construction, COME and GO retain their spatial, propositional meaning so that in terms of desemanticization they cannot be said to have grammaticalized.

A third well-known parameter is paradigmaticization (Lehmann 1995:132-137), that is, grammaticalizing elements tend to become part of a closed paradigm whose members are linked to each other by “paradigmatic relations, especially opposition and complementarity” (Lehmann 1995:132). Paradigmaticization has often been invoked in the analysis of so-called pseudo-coordination (V1 and V2; e.g., *try and do, go and get,*

etc.), the assumption being that a small number of possible V1s is an indicator of paradigmatic restriction and hence of grammaticalization (Kinn 2018). This measure is evidenced by the VVingOBL construction: its direct precursor in OE, the VVende pattern (see section 6), allowed at least nine different verbs in the V1 slot; by LME they had been reduced to three (COME, GO, RUN; see section 7), and in PDE they have essentially been further reduced to two that form a binary paradigm consisting of two terms with different deictic orientation: a “venitive” verb (COME) and an “andative” (GO), which differ by the implication that movement is towards the speaker in one case, and away from the speaker in the other. Some of the differences in usage between these two sub-patterns of the construction were hinted at in section 7.1.2, but a more detailed study holds the potential to reveal how they complement each other and how they interact with the BE progressive. That the RUNVingOBL subtype can still be used in PDE (albeit marginally) merely reflects the gradual nature of grammaticalization, where older, less frequent forms can live on alongside other variants (Hopper & Traugott 2003:49).

The parameter of decategorialization (Hopper 1991:30-31), whereby grammaticalizing units lose some of their markers of categoriality, including their morphosyntactic trappings, also applies to the VVingOBL construction. Goldberg (2006:51; see also section 8.2) aptly notes that the Ving form cannot appear with its own arguments (as illustrated in 45), unlike the related paraphrase involving a subordinate clause (i.e., “Bill went down the street *whistling a tune*”).

(45) \*Bill *went whistling a tune* down the street.

In (45), WHISTLE, a member of the class of transitive verbs, has decategorialized and reduced its argument structure, as is clear from its inability to govern a direct object.

Lastly, the parameter of bondedness or adjacency (Lehmann 1995:147-157) relates to the degree of syntagmatic cohesion “with which [a sign] is connected with another sign to which it bears a syntagmatic relation” (Lehmann 1995:147). In its most extreme form, bondedness leads to univerbation (e.g., German *keines Wegs* ‘of no way’ > *keineswegs* ‘by no means’). At the constructional level, bondedness has often been employed to examine the degree of grammaticalization and constructionalization of verbal periphrases of various kinds, for instance, the progressive periphrases of Spanish (Bybee & Torres Cacoullos 2009:201-204) and pseudocoordination in Norwegian (V1 *og* V2) (Kinn 2018). Grammaticalization correlates with a decrease in the presence of intervening material between V1 and V2, which strengthens auxiliation and a single-event reading of the construction in question.

For the VVingOBL construction, the degree of adjacency between V and Ving has been measured in this study by looking at the position of *-ly* manner adverbs (e.g., *carefully*, as in “John *carefully* shifted the nitroglycerine”) relative to V and Ving. The decision to make use of this particular manifestation of adjacency was a principled one: on the one hand, *-ly* adverbs can be retrieved computationally from big corpora such as EEBO and the BNC. On the other, manner adverbs are core-internal modifiers, that is, they modify internally the part of the clause consisting of the predicate and its arguments (Foley & Olson 1985:33-37; Van Valin & LaPolla 1997:162-171). They are thus subject to positional preferences different from those applying to aspectual

adverbs (*completely, continuously*), which are modifiers of the clause nucleus or predicate (cf. “Leslie *completely* immersed herself in the new language”), and to temporal (*early, subsequently*), evidential (*evidently*), and epistemic (*probably*) adverbs, which take the core of the clause in their scope and thus have much greater positional mobility (e.g., “*Probably*, Sam will bake a cake tomorrow”; “Robin saw Pat *earlier*”; see also Jackendoff 1972:47-107; Huddleston & Pullum 2002:574-580).

Tables 12-15 show the position of *-ly* manner adverbs relative to the VVing sequence. In order to obtain sufficient results, I searched the complete EEBO BYU and BNC BYU, as well as decades 1970s-2000s in COHA (Corpus of Historical American English; Davies 2010-). Three different search strings were employed, which allowed the extraction of all sequences consisting of either VAdvVingOBL, VVingAdvOBL, or AdvVVingOBL, respectively. *-ly* adverbs were also searched in CLMET3.0 by means of WordSmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012), within a context window of two words to the right (i.e., \*ing 0L 2R; see Table 15). Examples follow in (46)-(50).

COME \*ly\_r\_v?g or GO \*ly\_r\_v?g or RUN \*ly\_r\_v?g:

(46) Three horses, with a man leading the foremost, *came slowly clattering* down a steep incline from their stable. (CLMET3.03, 1885, Blind, *Tarantella*) [Co-event: concurrent result]

(47) But the elephants *went gaily dancing and trumpeting* away over the mountains, through Roumania and Georgia, through Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, until they came to their native land. (BNC, 1989, Aiken, *The kingdom under the sea*) [Co-events: manner of motion + concomitance]

COME \_v?g \*ly\_r or GO \_v?g \*ly\_r or RUN \_v?g \*ly\_r:

(48) [. . .] whan his fader knewe it he *went wepyng tenderly* to Saynt marcyal / and prayed hym to reyse his sone fro dethe to lyf. (EEBO, 1483, de Voragine/Caxton, *Legenda aurea sanctorum*) [Co-event: concomitance]

(49) She looked across the road, saw Meredith, smiled and *came striding athletically* towards her. (BNC, 1991, Granger, *A season for murder*) [Co-event: manner of motion]

\*ly\_r COME \_v?g or \*ly\_r GO \_v?g or \*ly\_r RUN \_v?g:

(50) [. . .] at length her Vncle numitorius and [. . .] icilius, these *hastily come crowding* through the presse, and call vpon fell appius for redresse: (EEBO 1617 Barksted, *Iuuenals tenth satyre*; cf. *OED*, s.v. *press*, n.<sup>1</sup> 5.a. ‘a crowd, a multitude’) [Co-event: manner of motion]

Tables 12-15 show a clear diachronic increase in adjacency, to the extent that by the end of the twentieth century occurrences of VVingOBL with an intervening manner adverb have virtually disappeared, especially in British English. These results suggest that VVing has become automated as a single processing unit through frequent collocation, a development which can lead, ultimately, to the formerly separate units (V + Ving) losing their individual meanings, as has already happened, for instance, with the construction involving modality GO mentioned earlier in this section.

**Table 12.** Placement of *-ly* Manner Adverbs in EEBO BYU

Pattern	COME as V	GO as V	RUN as V	Total
V Adv Ving OBL	57	9	6	72 (54.13%)
V Ving Adv OBL	42	5	3	50 (37.60%)
Adv V Ving OBL	9	1	1	11 (8.27%)
Total	108	15	10	133 (100.0%)

**Table 13.** Placement of *-ly* Manner Adverbs in BNC BYU

Pattern	COME as V	GO as V	Total
V Adv Ving OBL	0	1	1 (4.35%)
V Ving Adv OBL	17	5	22 (95.65%)
Adv V Ving OBL	0	0	0
Total	17	6	23 (100.0%)

**Table 14.** Placement of *-ly* Manner Adverbs in COHA

Pattern	COME as V	GO as V	Total
V Adv Ving OBL	2	3	5 (11.36%)
V Ving Adv OBL	20	19	39 (88.64%)
Adv V Ving OBL	0	0	0
Total	22	22	44 (100.0%)

**Table 15.** Placement of *-ly* Manner Adverbs in CLMET3.01 (1710-1780) and CLMET3.03 (1850-1920)

Pattern	COME as V 1710-1780	COME as V 1850-1920	GO as V 1710-1780	GO as V 1850-1920	Total
V Adv Ving OBL	0	5	0	3	8 (66.67%)
V Ving Adv OBL	1	2	0	1	4 (33.33%)
Total	1	7	0	4	12 (100.0%)

Note: Search string: *V \*ing OL 2R* (where V = a past tense or 3rd person singular form).

Summing up, the joint evidence of indicators such as frequency and productivity, paradigmaticization, decategorialization, and adjacency has allowed us to uncover the ongoing grammaticalization of the *VVingOBL* construction. The next section addresses serialization, which cross-linguistically is a frequent source of grammaticalized markers of tense, aspect, mood, and direction (Aikhenvald 2006:30-37).

## 8.2. Serialization

Goldberg (2006:50-52) suggests that the *V VingOBL* construction might qualify as a “serial verb construction” (SVC), despite the fact that English “generally allows only one verb per clause” (Goldberg 2019:48), unlike many other languages which can routinely combine verbs to express a single clause, as in (51), from Cantonese.

- (51) lei<sup>5</sup>    lo<sup>2</sup>    di<sup>1</sup>    saam<sup>1</sup>    lai<sup>4</sup>  
       you    take    PL    clothing    come  
       ‘bring some clothes’ (from Aikhenvald 2006:21)

Goldberg (2006) bases her suggestion on the existence of a number of “constraints” that limit the meaning and form of the *V VingOBL* construction, discussed already in sections 2 and 8.1, namely: (a) the progressive or iterative interpretation of the construction; (b) the low productivity of the verb (V) slot, which according to Goldberg is restricted to four intransitive verbs (COME, GO, RUN, TAKE *off*), though, as discussed in section 7, only COME and GO can be used productively in PDE; and (c) the fact that *Ving* cannot appear with its own arguments, as shown in (45). Based on this combined evidence, Goldberg (2006:52) argues that the *V VingOBL* construction “appears to be a serial verb construction of English, despite the fact that English does not allow serial verbs in general.”

Support for Goldberg’s claim depends largely on the features that one considers criterial for SVCs, since the notion of a SVC has itself not been delimited clearly in the literature. Based on the typological surveys in Foley and Olson (1985), Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006), Bisang (2009), and Shibatani (2009), and on recent work by Cleary-Kemp (2015) and Haspelmath (2016), it is possible to isolate a few basic properties of SVCs which recur and seem to have a direct bearing on the analysis of the *V VingOBL* construction:

- (a) each verb is an independent verb (e.g., Aikhenvald 2006:1, 5; Cleary-Kemp 2015:97; Haspelmath 2016:302-304);
- (b) the construction is monoclausal and “has the intonational properties of a monoverbal clause” (Aikhenvald 2006:7); grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, and negation have the whole SVC as their scope; similarly, “a manner adverb will have scope over a complete SVC” (Dixon 2006:339);
- (c) the construction “is conceived of as describing a single action” (Dixon 2006:339) or “multiple sub-events that form a single macro-event” (Cleary-Kemp 2015:120);
- (d) the verbs share one or more arguments (e.g., Aikhenvald 2006:12; Haspelmath 2016:309);
- (e) two basic categories of SVCs can be distinguished: asymmetrical and symmetrical (Aikhenvald 2006:3; see below);
- (f) there exists a hierarchy of serializability of verbs (Foley & Olson 1985:41-48; Aikhenvald 2006:48), with the types of verbs on the left more easily serialized than those on the right: motion verbs (‘come,’ ‘go’) < other intransitive verbs (‘wander,’ ‘crawl’) and postural verbs (‘sit,’ ‘stand,’ ‘lie’) < stative intransitive verbs (‘be dead,’ ‘ache’) < transitive verbs.

Property (a) is the most controversial, since the requirement for each verb to be an “independent verb” (Haspelmath 2016:303) has been variously interpreted. According to Aikhenvald (2006:5), each verb must have the ability “to function on its own,” and must not be “a dependent or a nominalized form” (Aikhenvald 2006:5; see also Cleary-Kemp 2015:102, 152). Haspelmath (2016:303), for his part, explains that the independent-verb criterion is intended to exclude auxiliaries, which are “not able to occur on their own without another verb,” except in an elliptical utterance. Therefore, a sequence such as *will go* “is not a serial verb construction in English” (Haspelmath 2016:303), but imperative sequences such as “*Go get the milk*” and “*Come eat with me*” “count as an SVC” (Haspelmath 2016:298; cf. Pullum 1990) since both verbs can occur in isolation. Yet a third interpretation of the independent-verb criterion is represented by Shibatani (2009:262). He draws attention to the fact that in Formosan languages “only one verb in the series has the potential of displaying the full range of formal finiteness features”; the others are severely restricted in contrast to autonomous verbs, for instance by their inability to choose focus marking or host a pronominal clitic. They may, however, show some finiteness features such as tense marking and verb agreement.

In view of the above, if property (a) is applied rigorously (i.e., Aikhenvald 2006; Cleary-Kemp 2015), the *V VingOBL* construction is disqualified from consideration as a SVC, since the *Ving* form is non-finite and cannot form a clause on its own. The same could be said of the *GO GET/COME EAT* pattern: apart from containing a non-finite form as well, the pattern is severely restricted in mood and tense (cf. “\*He came eat at that restaurant yesterday”) and might better be considered a lexical idiom, as Aikhenvald (2006:45–46) argues. The issue with respect to the independent-verb criterion is therefore largely a definitional one, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, and stems from the fact that verb serialization is not a theoretical concept with clearly definable properties valid in all languages for which it is reported. As Bisang (2009:811–812) puts it, “[i]t is still an open question to what extent what is discussed under the label of ‘serial verb construction’ [. . .] is actually a cross-linguistically coherent phenomenon.”

Property (b) (“the construction is monoclausal”), by contrast, is uncontroversial, as *V VingOBL* clearly complies with it, also with regard to the scope of manner adverbs, which extends over the core of the clause, i.e., the predicate and its arguments (see section 8.1). Consider in this respect, for instance, the cleft version of “She came striding athletically towards her” (cited in 49): “It was athletically [that she came striding towards her].” This can be compared with the ungrammatical “\*It was striding athletically towards her that she came,” which shows, in addition, that *V* and *Ving* cannot be partitioned, a point also made by Goldberg (2006:51–52) in her discussion of the construction.

Property (c) (“the construction describes a single event”) is also uncontroversial. As was discussed in section 3 in connection with Talmy’s (2000) typology of event integration, *V VingOBL* constitutes a complex event that is conceptualized as unitary (and hence represented as a single clause). Property (d) (“the verbs share one or more arguments”) also seems to apply, since *V* and *Ving* behave as a single unit, as described in section 8.1, and thus share both the subject and the oblique complement.



Properties (e) (“two categories of SVCs can be distinguished: asymmetrical and symmetrical”) and (f) (“there exists a hierarchy of serializability of verbs”) can be considered together. Symmetrical SVCs “consist of two or more verbs each chosen from a semantically and grammatically unrestricted class” (Aikhenvald 2006:3). Asymmetrical SVCs, by contrast, consist of “one verb from a relatively large, open, or unrestricted class, and another from a semantically or grammatically restricted (or closed) class” (Aikhenvald 2006:21). The verb from a closed class “provides a modificational specification: it is often a motion or posture verb expressing direction, or imparting a tense-aspect meaning to the whole construction” (Aikhenvald 2006:21). In agreement with the hierarchy of serializability shown in (f), asymmetrical deictic SVCs, as in the Cantonese example quoted as (51), are the most frequent and widespread cross-linguistically (Aikhenvald 2006:22, 48); in non-serializing languages or languages with limited serialization, serialization with deictic verbs of motion is the only type allowed (Foley & Olson 1985:48; Aikhenvald 2006:48).

As is evident, if we leave aside property (a), it can be said that the *V VingOBL* construction has numerous affinities with serial verb constructions, as Goldberg (2006) rightly suggested. Beyond this issue, reviewing the features that apply to SVCs cross-linguistically has also shed light on an aspect of the development of the *V VingOBL* construction which I pointed out in section 7.2, namely the fact that the sharp rise in productivity over the LModE period of the subtypes of the construction containing *COME* and *GO* is not accompanied by a parallel increase in frequency of the subtype with *RUN* (see Tables 4–6). In other words, as the *V VingOBL* construction settled into the form it has today (a construction of deictic orientation with *COME* and *GO*), the structural variant with *RUN* has become even more marginal than it was before, as could be expected of a non-serializing language such as English.

## 9. Conclusions

It was shown in the preceding sections that the *V VingOBL* construction originates in two motion constructions that have existed in the language since the OE period. The grammaticalization of the *BE* progressive and the important changes affecting the English lexicon which were reviewed in section 4 most probably assisted in the increased frequency and productivity of the *V VingOBL* construction, and in its integration into the grammatical system. As discussed in section 3, the construction represents a departure from the satellite-framed pattern (“Bill ran into the room”) predominant in English, and shares most of the properties of serial verb constructions (section 8.2), despite the status of English as a non-serializing language. These findings are in line with the view put forward in Slobin (2017:438–441) that factors of various kinds can act to limit, expand, or modify the patterns of language use that are predicted by the typological categorization of a given language. In the case of English, dramatic increases in verb descriptivity over time have led to the rise of different constructions, such as the *Way* construction (Fanego 2019) and the *V VingOBL* construction, which have served to accommodate the several hundreds of expressive verbs of manners of action that were added to the English lexicon from ME onward. Some of these newly-emerged constructions, as happens with the *V VingOBL* construction, fall beyond the typological make-up of English.

An important issue which could not be addressed in detail here relates to the pragmatics of the construction. The utility of this construction to convey vivid descriptions of motion events which are conceptualized as having duration is evident in many of the examples adduced along these pages (e.g., 20, 22, 43-50, etc.). However, the VVingOBL pattern can clearly serve other purposes as well, including the expression of negative attitudes towards the situation, which was discussed in section 7.1.2 in connection with examples (40)-(42). Questions pertaining to constructional networking should also be explored in the future: how do the two subtypes of the construction, one venitive (COME), the other andative (GO), interact with each other, and, more generally, with the BE progressive? Finally, an in-depth analysis of the construction in relation to text type and discourse conventions is also in order, as pointed out in section 7.2.

## Appendix

### *Examples of English Verb Descriptivity: goVingOBL in CLMET3.03* (number of occurrences of each Ving type indicated in parentheses)

- i. Manner of motion: AWANDER ‘to wander’ (cf. *OED*, s.v. *wandering*, n. 4), BLUNDER, BOUNCE (2), BOUND (3), BOWL ‘of a kite: to move by revolution’ (*OED*, s.v. *bowl*, v.<sup>1</sup> 3), BUMP, CAREER, CLIMB, CREEP, CURVET ‘to leap about’ (*OED*, s.v. *curvet*, v. 2), DART, DASH, DODGE ‘to move to and fro’ (*OED*, s.v. *dodge*, 1a), DRIFT (3), DROP, FLAP, FLASH, FLIT, FLOUNDER, FLUTTER (5), FLY (4), GALLOP, GALUMPH ‘to march on with irregular bounding movements’ (*OED*, s.v. *galumph*, v.), GLIDE, HALT, HASTE, HOBBLE, HURRY, JOSTLE, LIMP, MARCH, NESTLE ‘to move or bustle about’ (*OED nestle* v.<sup>2</sup>), PACE, PECK ‘to jerk, move suddenly’ (*OED*, s.v. *peck*, v.<sup>2</sup> 2), PLOD, POKE ‘to potter about’ (*OED*, s.v. *poke*, v.<sup>1</sup> 7b), POUND, POUR, PLUNGE (3), RACE (2), REEL (5), REVOLVE ‘to run so that the rotating parts are in motion’ (*OED*, s.v. *revolve*, v. 6c), RIDE, ROAM, ROLL, ROVE, RUSH (2), SIDLE, SKIM ‘to fly, etc. on or close to some surface’ (*OED*, s.v. *skim*, v. 9a), SLANT, SLIDE, SLIP (2), SPIN (4), SPRAWL, STAGGER, STALK, STEAL, STEP, STRIDE (2), STROLL, STRUGGLE (2), STUMBLE (2), SWAY, SWEEP (2), SWIM, SWING ‘to walk with swinging step’ (*OED*, s.v. *swing*, v.<sup>1</sup> 13), TEAR, THRILL ‘to pass with a thrill through’ (*OED*, s.v. *thrill*, v.<sup>1</sup> 5b), THRONG, TRAMP, TRAVEL, TRICKLE, TUMBLE (2), TURN, TWIRL, WADDLE, WANDER (3), WHIRL (2).
- ii. Concurrent result: BUZZ, CLATTER, CRASH (2), DRONE, KNOCK, LUMBER ‘of bees or beetles: to make a rumbling noise’ (2; *OED*, s.v. *lumber*, v.<sup>1</sup> 2), PEAL ‘to sound forth in a peal’ (*OED peal* v.<sup>1</sup> 2a), RUMBLE, RUSTLE, SCREAM, SPLASH, STAMP ‘to strike the ground forcibly with the sole of one’s foot’ (*OED*, s.v. *stamp*, v. 2b), STUMP ‘to walk clumsily or noisily’ (*OED*, s.v. *stump*, v.<sup>1</sup> 2a), TRAMP ‘to tread or walk with a heavy, resonant step’ (*OED*, s.v. *tramp*, v.<sup>1</sup> 1).
- iii. Concomitance: CROAK, CRY (3), DWINDLE, GROWL, JANGLE, LAUGH, LECTURE, MEDITATE, SHIVER (2), SHUDDER, SNUFFLE ‘of an animal: to draw air into the nostrils in order to smell something’ (*OED*, s.v. *snuffle*, v. 2), SULK, TALK, TREMBLE, WHISTLE, WHOOP, YAP ‘to bark sharply’ (*OED*, s.v. *yap*, v. 1).

## Acknowledgments

For generous financial support I am grateful to the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (grant FFI2017-86884-P). Thanks are also due to the editors and anonymous reviewers of *JEngL* for their most valuable suggestions on an earlier version, and to Laurel J. Brinton and Mark Davies.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The author received financial support for OA publication of this article from the Vicerrectorate for Research and Innovation of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

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## Notes

1. The verb-framed pattern is regularly employed in English with path verbs borrowed from Romance languages, such as *enter*, as in “He entered the room.” This kind of example differs from (14) in that path is marked only once, in the verb, and the manner of motion is left unexpressed; the expression of manner with borrowed path verbs is usually judged unacceptable (e.g., “\*He *entered* the room *walking*”).
2. In the corpus material used for the present study, it represents 9.8 percent of the occurrences in decades 1470-1490 in EEBO; this decreases to 3.5 percent in LModE (1710-1920), as a result of the steady decline of verb-second in most grammatical environments (Bækken 1998:59).
3. For a prior pilot study I employed The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2; 1,155,965 words for the period 1150-1500). The paucity of the data obtained made clear that a much larger corpus was necessary, hence the decision to use EEBO BYU, whose coverage starts only in the 1470s.
4. A fourth verb also attested was *FALL*, with sixteen occurrences in the collocation *FALL grovelling (up)on*.
5. Goldberg (2006) also mentions *TAKE off* ‘go off’ (*OED*, s.v. *take* v. 10.a) as one of the verbs occurring in the construction. As a path verb containing a specification of the direction of motion, *TAKE off* belongs in the same semantic group as *COME*, *GO*, or *FLEE*, but its role in the *V VingOBL* construction is clearly marginal in PDE: the BNC contains only one example.
6. A well-known problem with EEBO is the number of duplicates that it contains, as several different editions of the same text, reprinted years apart, were included. Since all the results were checked manually, I was able to find and remove duplicates, which, as it turned out, were infrequent.
7. Given space limitations, only a selection can be given of the *Ving*’s recorded in each historical period. The Appendix, which provides a sample of the *Ving*’s in CLMET3.03 (1850-1920), will hopefully give readers an idea of the richness and diversity of the English lexicon of manners of action.

8. The increase in frequency in the case of *COME**Ving*OBL and *go**Ving*OBL cannot be accounted for by a general increase in the number of occurrences of *COME* and *go*. After extracting all forms of these verbs in CLMET3.01 and CLMET3.03, the results confirmed that the frequency of *COME* and *go* in the *VVing*OBL construction increases at a much faster rate than does their frequency in all their uses considered together. The general frequency of *RUN* also increases considerably from CLMET3.01 to CLMET3.03, while the frequency of the *RUN**Ving*OBL pattern decreases.

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